

AfricaCom Shines Spotlight on New Forms of Digital Fraud

Africa's battle against digital fraud is in the spotlight at AfricaCom taking place until the end of the week at Cape Town's International Convention Centre.

Over 14 000 attendees have come together at Africa's biggest telecoms, media and technology event as network operators, handset manufacturers, software firms and others share new ways to battle malware seeking to defraud digital publishers like Google.

Fraudsters are impacting the long-term sustainability of the digital advertising industry, in particular, by perpetrating thousands of mobile-based fraud attempts daily. This is according to French anti-fraud solutions provider EVINA, exhibiting on Stand B50 at AfricaCom.

Through its EVINA DCBprotect flagship offering, EVINA has a passion for helping mobile carriers, mobile aggregators, mobile advertisers and others recover the USD 3 billion lost annually to digital monetisation fraud.

African telecoms firms are increasingly exploring partnerships with firms like EVINA in order to protect their end-users from fraud. EVINA is now protecting 90% of mobile transaction activities in Ivory Coast, Morocco, Cameroon and Senegal, and is also expanding in South Africa.

"Our experts have a long history of on-the-ground experience in working with the African mobile industry to beat mobile fraudsters. From fraudulent app installs to click cons, our Artificial Intelligence-based protection kit detects and blocks fraudulent mobile transactions while continuously adding to our anti-fraud Intellectual Property that we are using to great effect on the African continent," says EVINA CEO, David Lotfi.

Speaking on the sidelines of the event held on Cape Town's Foreshore, Mr Lotfi said digital monetisation fraud where malicious traffic sources seek to take financial advantage of global advertising networks like Google was a threat to both the subscribers and payment flows of major mobile carriers. Operators also suffer significant damage to their brand image while experiencing a substantial increase in customer complaints.

"Leading telcos worldwide trust us to safeguard their business interests as well as their end-users from mobile fraud that has the potential to generate at least 75 000 malicious transactions per month," says Mr Lotfi.

He explained that one example of recent fraudulent activity saw malware being installed at the firmware level on low-cost Android devices that are not Google-compliant and which are offered for sale on third-party sales platforms and not via established carriers.

"What happened is that the malware would start by itself and activate the mobile data service without the user's knowledge. Online ads would be clicked on, fake conversations started and ultimately the mobile user would lose huge amounts of

data while criminals raked in click-based revenue by defrauding publishers and their clients,” Mr Lotfi said.

Fortunately, well-attended international industry events like AfricaCom attract organisations like EVINA which have the means and the drive to win the war on digital advertising fraud. EVINA has a solid history of partnering with Africa’s leading telecoms sector players in the fight against fraud.

To illustrate, the firm recently worked with South Africa’s Wireless Application Service Providers’ Association (WASPA) to review the self-regulating industry body’s mobile security best practices. EVINA specifically assisted WASPA in reviewing its critical Fraud Detection and Mitigation Document (also referred to as the Best Practice Guidelines) – read with Section 4.11 of the WASPA Code of Conduct.

A full decade in development, EVINA’s forensic fraud detection platform replicates, tests and simulates malware in order to detect the most advanced and up-to-date malicious software. “This is fraud, but it is also cybercrime that goes as far as money laundering to fund the most heinous crimes against humanity. This battle is worth our attention and EVINA is pleased to be able to play a leading role in winning it,” concludes Mr Lotfi.